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WHAT 4-H CLUB WORK MEANS TO THE FAMILIES IN OUR COMMUNITY

A radio talk by Mrs. A. N. Breckenridge, Rockford, Illinois, delivered in the National 4-H club radio program, March 7, 1936, and broadcast by a network of 58 associate NBC radio stations.

In every county where boys and girls have been given the opportunity to belong to 4-H clubs, plans are now being made for the season of 1936. Our children are looking forward eagerly to the work that they will accomplish; the things they will learn; the money they will earn; and the good times they will enjoy. Parents of 4-H club boys and girls know that much more than this is to be gained by joining these clubs. As a mother who has been interested in 4-H club work for many years and who has a boy and a girl who are enthusiastic club members, I would like to tell you what I think 4-H club work has done for our community.

The most evident result of 4-H club training is the development of skills. Our girls learn how to sew, to plan and prepare meals, to can and preserve foods, to make the home attractive by arrangement of furniture, framing and hanging of pictures, refinishing walls and floors, and making accessories for the home. Our boys are trained in the various farm practices. Some of these things are taught in the rural high schools, but many of our boys and girls never reach high school. The 4-H club program is so varied that there is something new for every boy and girl even though he may have had all of the vocational training that his school offers him.

With these skills acquired in 4-H club work our boys and girls are raising the standards of living on the farms. Because the girl has learned how to dress herself attractively by making her own clothes, she is not satisfied with a poor quality ready-made garment. She is helping provide clothing of better quality for her family; also more wholesome and attractive food. She is making the home more comfortable and more beautiful. Fathers and Mothers who have not had the educational advantages of their children, or have been too busy to keep up to date are learning from their children better and easier methods of farm and home management.

In 4-H club work in our community our boys and girls are learning the principles of economy. Our boys know that it is cheaper, in the long run, to feed their calves a balanced ration; to buy purebred livestock; to plan for the fertility of the soil. Our girls know that they can have more and better clothes by making their own. They have learned that many of the most wholesome foods are those that may be produced at home by the farm family. These lessons, learned in the depression years, will have a lasting effect on these boys and girls.

The health of our young people is being improved by 4-H club work. Health examinations are not as common as they should be in our clubs, but the boys and girls who have had the benefits of these examinations are having tonsils removed, eye strain is being relieved by glasses, and dental needs are being taken care of. Improved health of the girls and their families is resulting from the study of food requirements and changed habits of eating. Study of posture is helping many of our children to a better appearance and better health.

4-H clubs are developing leaders in our community. Knowledge of parliamentary law, learned in meetings, is helping our children to be more useful in other organizations. Taking the responsibility of officers and committee

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members is teaching them how to work with others; while giving talks and demonstrations at the meetings promotes poise and self-confidence. Many of the future leaders of the farm bureau and other organizations will come from our present 4-H club membership.

The social benefits from 4-H club work should not be underestimated. It is important that our children have good times along with the responsibilities which they assume on the farm and in the farm home; and we parents are thankful for the wholesome recreation which is provided for in the 4-H club programs. Our club offers opportunities for wider acquaintance. Boys and girls make friends with young people not only in their own community but throughout the county by attendance at rallies, training schools, exhibits, and achievement programs. They meet young people from the entire state at the club tour and state fair; and from many other states, if they are so fortunate as to be able to attend the National Club Congress or the National Camp. Ambition to get a college education or attain higher goals of many kinds is often the result of exchange of ideas with other young people.

And so, at this planning time of the year, we fathers and mothers, who realize the great value of 4-H club work to our families and to our communities, are offering our encouragement and our cooperation. We feel that we should be willing to assist in every possible way our county farm and home advisers in promoting 4-H club work in all of its activities. We hope that many more boys and girls may have the advantages of 4-H club work this year, and we wish for all members a most successful and happy season.

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